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Prod. 3

DCI/IC 75-003

February 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Challenge Procedures for the
Intelligence Community

1. Some time ago you expressed interest in establishing within the community a regular system for the presentation of the views of devils' advocates, i.e., some sort of system which would ensure that majority views and the conventional wisdom concerning major intelligence judgments would be subject to effective challenge procedures. Though few would quarrel with the objectives of this proposal, several have, in fact, questioned the practicality of institutionalizing challenge procedures and have expressed the fear that the system's (non-monetary) costs might outweigh its benefits.

2. My own feeling about the subject are mixed: I very much favor the concept of regular challenge procedures, particularly as a part of the normal production process, but recognize that there will be pitfalls attending their establishment as a separate institution. Accordingly, I recommend a course which in general--though not in all its specifics--follows the route laid out by [] (in the paper at Tab A), but which also seeks to avoid some of the dangers identified by [] (in Tab B).

3. Specifically, what I propose can be summarized as follows:

-- The NIO responsible for a given paper will in all instances ensure that minority points of view and dissents are adequately represented and discussed. He will, in addition, report to USIB (in the case of NIEs and NIAMs) or to the DCI (in the case of other major papers) concerning principal issues in dispute, if any, and the extent to which he and his committee pondered contrary opinions and judgments.

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-- When appropriate, the D/DCI/NIO will appoint a devil's advocate (DA) to represent dissenting views. An official DA will normally be appointed when an interagency paper (1) is considered to be of unusual significance to US interests and policies; (2) contains judgments which are clearly controversial; or (3) makes estimates which, if wrong, would likely have very important (and adverse) effects on US attitudes and policies.

-- The DA, a senior and experienced officer in the community, will be responsible for formulating and representing dissenting views throughout the life of the paper under consideration, i.e., from his initial appointment (which could occur at any time in the production process) through USIB discussion.

-- The DA will be responsible for soliciting the views of other dissenters within the Community. He will also provide the DCI or USIB with an account of his service before the given paper is approved for publication.

-- The NIO and the DA will, in those instances when mistaken estimates might result in very serious damage to US interests, provide the DCI or USIB with a written statement concerning the possible implications of misestimating.

-- On those occasions when a paper is time-sensitive it will be incumbent upon the DA to accomplish his tasks with considerable dispatch.

-- The NIO and DA will follow the procedures outlined in detail in Tab A from p. 5 through p. 10 (under the heading, "And Some Specific Proposals").

4. If you approve, we are prepared to circulate this proposal to USIB for its consideration at some future meeting.

Samuel V. Wilson
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

Attachments: As stated

cc: D/DCI/NIO w/att

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